Assessing Balance and Fall Risk

As a physician or other health-care provider, you know that the results of a fall in an older adult can be devastating. One in three adults over the age of 65 falls each year and less than half of these incidents are reported to a health-care provider. In 2010, the medical costs associated with falls exceeded $30 billion.¹

The Timed Up and Go (TUG) Test is a quick, easy and reliable tool to assess your patients’ balance and risk for falls. The only items of equipment required to perform the test are a chair with arms and a stopwatch. Patients wear their normal footwear and use their regular walking aids if they have any.

Directions

• Mark or identify a line 3 meters (9.8 feet) away from a standard armchair. (You may use easy-to-see, colored tape.)

• Begin by having the patient sit back in a standard arm chair. The upper extremities should not be placed on the assistive device, but it should be nearby within grasp.

• Give the patient the following instructions: “When I say ‘Go,’ stand up and walk at a comfortable and safe pace to the line on the floor, turn, return to the chair and sit down again.” Demonstrate the test to the patient if needed.

• Conduct the Test: On the word “go,” start timing. Stop timing after the patient’s buttocks have touched the chair. Record the findings. Complete the test 2 times if possible and use the average score.

• Record your findings on the form on the reverse side of this page.
**Record TUG Test Results Here**

Patient Name: ________________________ Age: ____ Date:_______ Time:_______ a.m./p.m.

Trial 1 ____________seconds

Trial 2 ____________seconds

Average: __________seconds

Observe the patient’s postural stability, gait, stride length and sway.

Circle all that apply:
- Slow tentative pace
- Loss of balance
- Short Strides
- Little or no arm swing
- Steadying self on walls
- Shuffling
- En bloc turning
- Not using assistive device properly

Notes:

**Results**

On average, older adults who take ≥ 12 seconds to complete the test are at high risk for falling. These patients may benefit from further intervention, such as balance and stability programs, gait training on various surfaces, stair climbing and a strengthening program. Good Shepherd offers these services at all our outpatient locations.

To schedule your patient at one of our outpatient locations or for more information on our services, visit www.GoodShepherdRehab.org or call 1-888-44-REHAB.

**References:**
